

NEWS RELEASE



a division of the
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Labor Day Weekend

Jefferson City - Labor Day weekend is traditionally one of the busiest boating weekends of the year. It can also mark a big weekend for accidents. Accident risks multiply at busy times such as Labor Day weekend, when recreational boating increases on popular lakes and rivers. The Water Patrol will be working extended shifts and targeting areas where violations result in higher risk of accident involvement. The chance of being involved in an accident cannot be completely alleviated but can be reduced by using good judgment, courtesy, common sense and knowledge and obedience of boating safety laws.

“Boat operators need to recognize that factors such as speed, recklessness and impaired operation can create a deadly combination,” said Colonel Jerry Adams, Commissioner of the Missouri State Water Patrol. “The added combination of wind, sun, noise, vibration and the motion of the water all intensify the effects of alcohol and drugs, compounding danger.” It is extremely important to remember to always have a designated sober driver.

Here are a few safety tips.

1. **Wear a life jacket.** Approximately 80% of the victims in fatal boating accidents aren't wearing life jackets.
2. **Don't drink and boat.** Up to 50% of fatal boating accidents involve alcohol use.
3. **Watch your speed.** With increased speed comes less reaction time when confronted with near miss/hit situations.
4. **Attach your emergency ignition safety switch lanyard** to yourself in the event of a fall overboard. This will shut the engine off and prevent the vessel from circling back on you.
5. **Avoid** congested areas and don't jump wakes.
6. **Keep a sharp lookout** and steer well clear of other craft.
7. **Don't overload your boat.**
8. **Know before you go.** Operators should be familiar with the laws and safe boating practices prior to getting on the water. Getting a weather forecast before leaving the dock and watching current conditions as they may develop will assist boaters in avoiding potentially dangerous situations.

Remember, there is a new law effective January 2005 that mandates operators of vessels on the lakes of the state born after January 1, 1984 must take a boating safety education course.

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at www.mswp.state.mo.us for updates on Boating Safety Courses in your area.

MISSOURI STATE WATER PATROL
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